

Matthew 19:1-6: Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Intro: WCF 24.2: Marriage [define here] was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

John Piper: The deepest and highest meaning of marriage – not sexual intimacy, as good as that is, not friendship, as good as that is, not mutual helpfulness, as good as that is, not childbearing and childrearing, as good as that is, but the flesh-and-blood display in the world of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church.

John Piper: There are two ways to be compassionate and caring in relation to divorce – not at all meaning that you choose between them, but that we must pursue both. One is to come along side divorced persons while they grieve and (wherever necessary) repent, and to stay by them through the painful transitions, and to fold them into our lives, and to help them find a way to enjoy the forgiveness and the strength for new kinds of obedience that Christ has already obtained for them when he died and rose again. That's one way to love. And I pray we will all pursue it. The other way to respond with care and compassion is to articulate a hatred for divorce, and why it is against the will of God, and to do all we can biblically to keep it from happening.

We see Jesus confront false teachers, the Pharisees, by pointing them back to God's Word in Genesis which shows that divorce is against God's righteous way because marriage is God permanently joining one man and one woman in a one flesh union that should not be separated.

1. Jesus Keeps Loving And Healing

Matthew 19:1-2: Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

a. Jesus finished the sayings in chapter 18: He taught us how to relate to one another in the church – how to love one another in the church – how do deal with offenses and sins and temptations in the church – how to forgive one another in the church. & isn't marriage a most fitting relationship to apply Jesus' teachings on forgiveness!

b. Jesus continued to heal: Jesus was preaching & teaching large crowds, & He healed the sick. Again, this points us to the reality of Who Jesus is: He's the One Who has come to make all wrongs right. He's the last Adam Who is cleaning up the mess the first Adam made! He's come to destroy the works of the devil & abolish sickness!

c. Jesus is the one who truly loves and cares: Ligon Duncan: And what we learn [is] that Jesus is the one who truly cares about people. And that is so important in light of the difficult things that He's going to say in a few moments. Jesus is going to have a view of marriage, divorce, and remarriage which is, if we can use this language, more narrow than the view of [the] Pharisees, all of them. The Pharisees, whichever side they are on, are going to have a more relaxed view of the grounds for divorce. And so Jesus is going to say some things that are unpopular. But it is very important before we see what Jesus says, to see that Jesus is the one who truly cares about people. It is not the Pharisees with their [more relaxed views of divorce] that care about your life and your soul.

d. True love and care will get into your personal business about marriage: Should the church be so involved concerning my marriage? Yes! **J.C. Ryle:** Nations are nothing but a collection of families. The good order of the family depends entirely upon keeping the highest standards of the marriage tie. And so we ought to be thankful that the great head of the church had a definite opinion about marriage and family.

2. The Pharisees Test Jesus By Asking Him About Divorce

Matt 19:3: & Pharisees came up to him & tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

a. The Pharisees' test: Remember the Pharisees are part of the Jewish leadership of Jesus' day. They are the ones who are supposed to know God's Word, live by it faithfully, and teach it. But they are shown, over & over again in the Gospels, to pervert God's Word, fail to live it out, and they lead God's people astray. Jesus calls them hypocrites, brood of vipers, blind guides, lovers of money – He pronounces woes upon them! They are acting like Satan here testing God (same word used of Satan tempting Jesus in Matt. 4!)! Do not put the LORD your God to the test! But they are testing the God-Man, Jesus!

D. A. Carson: Their "test," here, was probably delivered in the hope that Jesus would say something to damage his reputation with the people or even seem to contradict Moses. Perhaps, too, they hoped that Jesus would say something that would entangle him in the Herod-Herodias affair so that he might meet the Baptist's fate.

b. We must ask Jesus questions for the right reasons: We want to know Him! We want to grow in holiness!

c. Sadly, divorce was very common in Jesus' day: There were different schools of thought in Jesus' day about how permissible divorce was (Shammai: more strict; Hillel: more relaxed). So many Jewish leaders allowed divorce for the most ridiculous reasons: failures in cooking; if you found a better looking woman, etc.

D. A. Carson: Josephus, for instance, himself a divorcee, was a Pharisee; and in his view divorce was permitted "for any causes whatsoever".

This is very similar to our day in America. Divorce is also out of control here – no fault divorce. Many churches don't preach or teach on this or hold their members accountable. But we are worse than those in Jesus' day. We have Jesus and His teaching, and we have rebelled against it – judgment will be greater for us than for them.

d. Sinful divorce can be a particularly grievous sin: It happens over weeks and months of people planning and working with lawyers and in a thought out and deliberate way, planning to disobey God and a willful refusal to submit to God's Word and do what He commands. **GOSPEL!**

Repentance from sinful divorce: Reconciliation in the marriage! Going back to your spouse renewing the covenant of marriage.

3. Jesus Teaches That There Are Only Two Genders

Matthew 19:4-5: He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'?"

Gen 1:27: God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male & female he created them

Genesis 2:20-25: The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

4. Jesus Teaches That The Words Of Moses In Genesis Are The Words Of God

Matthew 19:4-6: He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they

shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

The "He Who created them from the beginning" in Matthew 19:4 is God. And Jesus tells us in Matthew 19:5 that this same God said ("he who created them from the beginning" said in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"?)

That's Genesis 2:24, which Moses wrote! Moses was inspired by God to write God's Word in Genesis!

5. Jesus Teaches That Marriage Is Primary, Personal, And Permanent

Matt. 19:4-6: He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male & female, & said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father & his mother & hold fast to his wife, & they shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

a. Jesus teaches that marriage is the primary, of-first-importance relationship of all relationships on earth between human beings: Verse 5: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife"
- More important than parent/child; More than siblings; More than friends; More than work colleagues

Jesus is most important: Luke 14:26: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Garrett Kell: Sexual pleasure will never ultimately satisfy you. A wonderful spouse will never fulfill you. Neither sex nor spouse can do what only God can. You can have the best spouse on the planet & enjoy the most fulfilling sex life imaginable, yet this fact remains: if your heart is not satisfied in God, it will wander to find satisfaction elsewhere. Spouses can be wonderful helpers, but they are sorry saviors. Jesus alone can satisfy something as complex as the human soul.

b. Jesus teaches that marriage is the most personal relationship you will ever be in: It's a one flesh union!
Verses 5-6: and they shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh.

1) They become one in body: 1 Corinthians 6:15-20: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."
¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (**Book: Sex is like a magnet – mingling souls!**)

Marriage (Cov+Sex) is the only relationship in which a man & a woman can have & enjoy this sexual relationship.

2) They become one in commitment: This is the heart of marriage: they are committed to one another: to stay married no matter what: to display the absolute permanence & unchanging nature of Christ's love for the Church.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8: Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.
⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends.

Vows: I, Chris, take you, Dee, / to be my wedded wife / to have and to hold / from this day forward / for better for worse / for richer for poorer / in sickness and in health / to love and to cherish / till death us do part / according to God's holy ordinance / and thereto I pledge you myself.

3) They become one in mission: Psalm 34:3: Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!

They are to help one another pursue Christ; grow in Christ; fight sin; store up treasures in heaven; get prepared for heaven; raise godly children; carry out the great commission, etc. The wife is called to follow her husband and help her husband to accomplish what God has called him to do. They do this together!

4) They become one as Christ and the Church become one: Ephesians 5:22-33: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, & is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy & without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes & cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ "Therefore a man shall leave his father & mother & hold fast to his wife, & the two shall become one flesh." ³² This mystery is profound, & I am saying that it refers to Christ & the church. ³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, & let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Writer: Emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, financially, and in every other way, the couple is to become one.

c. Jesus teaches that marriage is God permanently joining a man & a woman & making them one:

Verse 6: So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

Pastor: When I do a wedding . . . I begin at the front end with: "We have gathered to solemnize [to seriously/formally celebrate] an act that God is about to perform in these next thirty minutes. Therefore, let us now invoke His presence."

Since God does it, no person should separate what God has joined: Malachi 2:13-16: Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. ¹⁵ Has not *the LORD* made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel

John Piper: The deepest and highest meaning of marriage – the flesh-and-blood display in the world of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church.

The Bible begins and ends with a marriage: Adam and Eve; Christ and the Church:

- **Jeremiah 31:31-32:** the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel & the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband
- **Hosea 1:2:** When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD."
- **Hosea 2:19-20:** I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness & in justice, in steadfast love & in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.
- **Jesus comes as the great Bride-Groom!**
- **2 Corinthians 11:2:** I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.
- **Revelation 19:7-9:** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said¹ to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are

invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Pastor: The end [goal] of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for His Son Jesus Christ that might enjoy Him and on whom He might pour forth His love. And the end of all things in providence are to make way for the exceeding expressions of Christ's love to His spouse and for her exceeding close and intimate union with, and high and glorious enjoyment of Him and to bring this to pass. And therefore the last thing and the issue of all things is the marriage of the Lamb. And the wedding day is the last day, the day of judgment, or rather that will be the beginning of it. The wedding feast is eternal; and the love and joys, the songs, entertainments and glories of the wedding never will be ended. It will be an everlasting wedding day.

For us to enjoy all of this, Jesus had to endure the greatest divorce ever! He had to go to that cross and bear the wrath and curse of God His Father and endure this most horrible separation as He cried out "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?!" He bore God's curse for us! He died! But then He rose again from the dead!

Jesus confronts false teachers, the Pharisees, by pointing them back to God's Word in Genesis which shows that divorce is against God's righteous way because marriage is God permanently joining one man and one woman in a one flesh union that should not be separated.

Christ Is The Groom Who Never Leaves But To His Bride Forever Cleaves & All Who Trust Him He Receives!

We long for love that will not end
Therefore our God His Son would send
To win a bride He did descend
Yet she against Him did offend
But He still loved – her hate suspend
Before her He would condescend
And on that cross His life would end
Then from the grave He did ascend
If you'll trust – on Him depend
He'll save you now and be your friend
He'll give you love that will not end
But forevermore extend
Forever at His side you'll spend
He gives you joy that will transcend
His love you cannot comprehend!

O love that will not let me go
Deep from His heart great mercies flow
For through His love in grace we grow
When all on Him our hopes we throw
He makes our sin as white as snow
On us great favor He'll bestow
If we're humble, meek, and low
He saves us from the hell below
All because our God we know
He'll make our face shine with a glow!

It's God Who joins – oh this is sweet!
He loves you so and won't mistreat
If a spouse you hope to meet
The wait for you is long with heat
You can be sure God will replete

Your deepest needs He'll more than meet
So bow to Him, trust at His feet
He satisfies more than the sheet
And then someday on that gold street
You'll know in Him you are complete!

Christ is God Who wrote the law
So Moses bows to Him in awe
Hardness of heart – we fight and claw
This kills marriage – lovers withdraw
You walk away – it's the last straw
But in all this there's a great flaw
There's no submission – Christ is all!
What Jesus said will drop your jaw
No separation is His law
So bow to Him and you won't fall
From your spouse you won't withdraw!

What God has joined let no man break
The two are one our God did make
With joy our Christ in love did take
A bride to keep and not forsake
And since all marriage in His wake
Points to this truth, make no mistake
We stay together for His sake
Don't listen to the wicked snake
Embrace the marriage hard with ache
And fight to stay – may love awake
To selfish sin, die and forsake
Serve the other – don't give and take
And do this all for His name's sake
For His glory's what's at stake
But you He never will forsake!

If you've failed in this high call
There is a Savior – Christ is all!
He died to save you from your fall
And heal you from the bitter gall
So in His name for mercy call
He'll take your sins – both big and small
And cast them down – never recall
He'll give new life – make you stand tall!

Christ Jesus Hates The Sin Divorce
But Faithful Marriage He'll Endorse
One Man, One Woman In Covenant Force
Become One Flesh In Intercourse
What Marriage Is He Is The Source
For He's The Groom Who'd Reinforce
His Love For Us Without Remorse
By Death He Faced The Great Divorce

Then Rose So Life Would Take Its Course
He'll Never Leave His Bride, No Force
Could Ever Separate Enforce
For His Love Like Great War Horse
Will Overwhelm With Power Source
For He's Our All, And Never Coarse
So Trust Your Groom, His Word Endorse
For He Alone Can Stop Divorce!